

Amendments To The Claims

Please cancel claims 5, 8, 13, 16, and 21, amend claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, and 17, and add claims 22-25 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A catheter comprising:

a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon, ~~and~~

a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft, the proximal end of the catheter shaft ~~being provided with~~ having a permanently affixed bending section, the bending section having a flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end, the bending section ~~formed as~~ including a plurality of offset cuts ~~cut into~~ formed in the proximal end of the catheter shaft, and

a fluid impermeable covering disposed to seal the plurality of offset cuts.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of offset cuts are spiral cuts ~~into the proximal end of the catheter shaft.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the offset cuts extend in a direction generally parallel to one another ~~and are generally perpendicular to a lengthwise direction of the catheter shaft.~~

5.-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim [[6]] 1, wherein the seal is designed as a sleeve or tube which is fastened to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed as a soft-annealed material section of the catheter shaft.

10. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim 9, wherein the soft-annealed section is surrounded by ~~the offset cuts~~ a spiral spring.

11. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed by a transition member of the fitting which ~~consists of~~ comprises a flexible plastic material.

12. (Original) The catheter according to claim 11, wherein the transition member has an undercut which is engaged by a complementary holding member of the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

13.-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The catheter according to claim [[3]]1, wherein the seal is fastened by an adhesive to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A catheter comprising:

a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon, and

a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft, the proximal end of the catheter shaft ~~being provided with~~ having a permanently affixed bending section, the bending section having a flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end, the bending section ~~formed as~~ including a spiral cut ~~into~~ formed in the proximal end of the catheter shaft, and

a fluid impermeable covering disposed to seal the plurality of offset cuts.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The catheter according to claim ~~[[18]]~~ 17, wherein the seal is designed as a sleeve or tube which is fastened by an adhesive to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

20. (Previously Presented) The catheter according to claim 17, wherein the bending section is formed as a soft-annealed material section of the catheter shaft.

21. (Canceled)

22. (New) A catheter comprising:

a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon, and

a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft,

the proximal end of the catheter shaft including a plurality of balls mounted on the proximal end of the catheter shaft and spaced to provide kink-free bending of the proximal end.

23. (New) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are affixed to the catheter shaft by an adhesive bond.

24. (New) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are mechanically coupled to the catheter shaft.

25. (New) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are affixed to the catheter shaft using a heat shrinkable tube disposed over the plurality of balls.